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The President's Radio Address

April 26, 2003

Good morning. As America continues to fight and win the war on terror, our Government is also focused on another national priority, growing our economy and creating jobs.

America's economy has been through a lot. We experienced the shock of a terrorist attack. We have endured a recession. We had to deal with some major corporate scandals. We faced the uncertainty of war, and we have seen a slowdown in the global economy, which weakens demand for American goods and services. In spite of all of this, the American economy is growing and growing faster than most of the industrialized world.

There are great strengths in this economy. Lower interest rates have helped more Americans buy their own homes. Gas and other energy prices are coming down, and consumers are getting the savings immediately. Inflation is low, and America's families are seeing their incomes on the rise. The entrepreneurial spirit is healthy in America, as small-business men and women put their ideas and dreams into action every day. And America's greatest economic strength is the pride, the skill, and the productivity of American workers.

Yet, we know that America's economy is not meeting its full potential. We know our economy can grow faster and create new jobs at a faster rate. We also know that the right policies in Washington can unleash the great strengths of this economy and create the conditions for growth and prosperity.

On Monday, Members of Congress return from recess, and they will face some important decisions on the future of our economy. I have proposed a series of specific measures to create jobs by removing obstacles to economic growth. My jobs-and-growth plan would reduce tax rates for everyone who pays income tax, provide relief for families and small businesses, and help millions of seniors in retirement by eliminating the double taxation of dividends.

With a robust package of at least \$550 billion in across-the-board tax relief, we will help create more than a million new jobs by the end of 2004. Some Members of Congress support tax relief but say my proposal is too big. Since they already agree that tax relief creates jobs, it doesn't make sense to provide less tax relief and, therefore, create fewer jobs. I believe we should enact more tax relief so that we can create more jobs and more Americans can find work and provide for their families.

Americans understand the need for action. This week in Ohio, I met Mike Kovach, whose business is in Youngstown, Ohio. Mike started and runs a growing company, wants to hire new people, and would benefit from lower taxes. Mike says, "Anytime you can improve the bottom line of Main Street business, it's good for the city; it's good for the State; and it's great for the Nation. It all trickles up, instead of trickling down."

I urge Congress to listen to the common sense of people like Mike Kovach. He and tens of millions of Americans like him need our help in building the prosperity of our country. Tax relief is good for families and good for our entire economy. The jobs-and-growth plan I have proposed is fair; it is responsible; it is urgent. And Congress should pass it in full.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:53 a.m. on April 25 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 25 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks on Operation Iraqi Freedom in Dearborn, Michigan

April 28, 2003

The President. Thank you for that warm welcome. I'm glad to be here. I regret that I wasn't here a few weeks ago when the statue came down. I understand you had quite a party. I don't blame you. A lot of the people in the Detroit area had waited years for that great day.

Many Iraqi Americans know the horrors of Saddam Hussein's regime firsthand. You also know the joys of freedom you have found here in America. You are living proof the Iraqi people love freedom and living proof the Iraqi people can flourish in democracy. People who live in Iraq deserve the same freedom that you and I enjoy here in America. And after years of tyranny and torture, that freedom has finally arrived.

I have confidence in the future of a free Iraq. The Iraqi people are fully capable of self-government. Every day, Iraqis are moving toward democracy and embracing the responsibilities of active citizenship. Every day, life in Iraq improves as coalition troops work to secure unsafe areas and bring food and medical care to those in need.

America pledged to rid Iraq of an oppressive regime, and we kept our word. America now pledges to help Iraqis build a prosperous and peaceful nation, and we will keep our word again.

Mr. Mayor, thanks, I appreciate you greeting me once again here in Dearborn. I appreciate your leadership. If you've got any problems with the garbage or the potholes, call the mayor. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank members of the congressional delegation who have joined us today. Thank you all for coming. Michigan is well represented in the Halls of the United States Congress. I want to thank the folks from the State government who have joined us today, and local governments.

I appreciate so very much the CEOs of the major automobile manufacturing companies who are based here in Detroit who are here, Rick Wagoner, Bill Ford, and Dieter Zetsche. Thank you all for coming. I look forward to discussing things with you later.

Right before I came in here I had the opportunity to meet with some extraordinary men and women, our fellow Americans who knew the cruelties of the old Iraq. And like me, they believed deeply in the promise of a new Iraq.

I spoke with Najda Egaily, a Sunni Muslim from Basra who moved to the United States 5 years ago. Najda learned the price of dissent in Iraq in 1988, when her brother-in-law was killed after laughing at a joke about Saddam Hussein in a house that was bugged.

"In Iraq," Najda says, "we could never speak to anyone about Saddam Hussein. We had to make sure the windows were closed." The windows are now open in Iraq. Najda and her friends will never forget seeing the images of liberation in Baghdad. Here's what she said: "We called each other, and we were shouting. We never believed that Saddam Hussein would be gone."

Audience member. He's gone.

The President. Like Najda, a lot of Iraqis—a lot of Iraqis—feared the dictator, the tyrant, would never go away. You're right. He's gone.

Audience members. U.S.A! U.S.A! U.S.A!

Audience member. *[Inaudible]*—back in the—*[inaudible]*—

Audience member. Because of you, Mr. President, so can you.

Audience member. *[Inaudible]*.

The President. We love free speech in America. *[Laughter]*

I talked to Tarik Daoud, a Catholic from Basra who now lives in Bloomfield Hills. When the dictator regime fell, here's what Tarik said. He said, "I am more hopeful today than I've ever been since 1958. We need to take the little children in Iraq and hold their hands and really teach them what freedom is all about." He says, "The new generation could really make democracy work."

He's right to be optimistic. From the beginning of this conflict, we have seen brave Iraqi citizens taking part in their own liberation. Iraqis have warned our troops about landmines and enemy hideouts and military arsenals.

Earlier this month, Iraqis helped marines locate the seven American prisoners of war who were then rescued in Northern Iraq. One courageous Iraqi man gave marines detailed layouts of a hospital in An Nasiriyah, which led to the rescue of American soldier Jessica Lynch.

Iraqi citizens are now working closely with our troops to restore order to their cities and improve the life of their nation. In Basra, hundreds of police volunteers have joined with coalition forces to patrol the streets. In Baghdad, more than 1,000 citizens are doing

joint patrols with coalition troops. And residents are also working with coalition troops to collect unexploded munitions from neighborhoods and repair the telephone system. People are working to improve the lives of the average citizens in Iraq.

I want you to listen to what an Iraqi engineer said who was working with U.S. Army engineers to restore power to Baghdad. He said, "We are very glad to work with the Americans to have power for the facilities. The Americans are working to help us." Iraqi Americans, including some from Michigan, are building bridges between our troops and Iraqi civilians. Members of the Free Iraqi Forces are serving as translators for our troops and are delivering humanitarian aid to the citizens.

One of these volunteers, an Iraqi American who fled Saddam Hussein's regime in 1991, recently returned to his homeland with the 101st Airborne Division. A few weeks ago, when he first saw the cheering crowds of Iraqis welcome coalition troops in Hillah, he wept. He said people could hardly believe what was happening, and he told them, "Believe it. Liberation is coming."

Yes, there were some in our country who doubted the Iraqi people wanted freedom, or they just couldn't imagine they would be welcome—welcoming to a liberating force. They were mistaken, and we know why. The desire for freedom is not the property of one culture; it is the universal hope of human beings in every culture.

Whether you're Sunni or Shi'a or Kurd or Chaldean or Assyrian or Turkoman or Christian or Jew or Muslim—no matter what your faith, freedom is God's gift to every person in every nation. As freedom takes hold in Iraq, the Iraqi people will choose their own leaders and their own Government. America has no intention of imposing our form of government or our culture. Yet, we will ensure that all Iraqis have a voice in the new Government and all citizens have their rights protected.

In the city of An Nasiriyah, where free Iraqis met recently to discuss the political future of their country, they issued a statement beginning with these words: Iraq must be democratic.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Thank you. That historic declaration expresses the commitment of the Iraqi people and their friends, the American people. The days of repression from any source are over. Iraq will be democratic.

The work of building a new Iraq will take time. That nation is recovering not just from weeks of conflict but from decades of totalitarian rule.

In a nation where the dictator treated himself to palaces with gold faucets and grand fountains, 4 out of 10 citizens did not even have clean water to drink. While a former regime exported milk and dates and corn and grain for its own profit, more than half a million Iraqi children were malnourished. As Saddam Hussein let more than \$200 million worth of medicine and medical supplies sit in warehouses, one in eight Iraqi children were dying before the age of 5. And while the dictator spent billions on weapons, including gold-covered AK-47s, nearly a quarter of Iraqi children were born underweight. Saddam Hussein's regime impoverished the Iraqi people in every way.

Today, Iraq has only about half as many hospitals as it had in 1990. Seventy percent of its schools are rundown and overcrowded. A quarter of the Iraqi children are not in school at all. Under Saddam's regime, the Iraqi people did not have a power system they could depend on. These problems plagued Iraq long before the recent conflict. We're helping the Iraqi people to address these challenges, and we will stand with them as they defeat the dictator's legacy.

Right now, engineers are on the ground working with Iraqi experts to restore power and fix broken water pipes in Baghdad and other cities. We're working with the International Red Cross, the Red Crescent Societies, the International Medical Corps, and other aid agencies to help Iraqi hospitals get safe water and medical supplies and reliable electricity. Our coalition is cooperating with the United Nations to help restart the ration distribution system that provides food at thousands of sites in Iraq. And coalition medical facilities have treated Iraqis from everything from fractures and burns to symptoms of stroke.

One Iraqi man who was given medical help with his wife and sister aboard the U.S. Navy ship *Comfort* said, "They treat us like family. There are babies in Iraq who are not cared for by their mothers as well as the nurses have cared for us."

Already, we are seeing important progress in Iraq. It wasn't all that long ago that the statue fell, and now we're seeing progress.

Rail lines are reopening, and fire stations are responding to calls. Oil—Iraqi oil owned by the Iraqi people—is flowing again to fuel Iraq's powerplants. In Hillah, more than 80 percent of the city has now running water. City residents can buy meats and grains and fruits and vegetables at local shops. The mayor's office, the city council have been reestablished.

In Basra, where more than half of the water treatment facilities were not working before the conflict—more than half weren't functioning—water supplies are now reaching 90 percent of the city. The opulent Presidential palace in Basra will now serve a new and noble purpose. We've established a water purification unit there to make hundreds of thousands of liters of clean water available to the residents of the city of Basra.

Day by day, hour by hour, life in Iraq is getting better for the citizens. Yet, much work remains to be done. I have directed Jay Garner and his team to help Iraq achieve specific long-term goals. And they're doing a superb job. Congress recently allocated 2.5—nearly \$2.5 billion for Iraq's relief and reconstruction. With that money, we are renewing Iraq with the help of experts from inside our Government, from private industry, from the international community, and most importantly, from within Iraq.

We are dispatching teams across Iraq to assess the critical needs of the Iraqi people. We're clearing landmines. We're working with Iraqis to recover artifacts, to find the hoodlums who ravished the National Museum of Antiquities in Baghdad. Like many of you here, we deplore the actions of the citizens who ravished that museum. And we will work with the Iraqi citizens to find out who they were and to bring them to justice.

We're working toward an Iraq where, for the first time ever, electrical power is reliable and widely available. One of our goals is to

make sure everybody in Iraq has electricity. Already, 17 major powerplants in Iraq are functioning. Our engineers are meeting with Iraqi engineers. We're visiting powerplants throughout the country and determining which ones need repair, which ones need to be modernized, and which ones are obsolete, powerplant by powerplant. More Iraqis are getting the electricity they need.

We're working to make Iraq's drinking water clean and dependable. American and Iraqi water sanitation engineers are inspecting treatment plants across the country to make sure they have enough purification chemicals and power to produce safe water.

We're working to give every Iraqi access to immunizations and emergency treatment and to give sick children and pregnant women the health care they need. Iraqi doctors and nurses and other medical personnel are now going back to work. Throughout the country, medical specialists from many countries are identifying the needs of Iraqi hospitals for everything from equipment and repairs to water to medicines.

We're working to improve Iraqi schools by funding a back-to-school campaign that will help train and recruit Iraqi teachers, provide supplies and equipment, and bring children across Iraq back into clean and safe schools. And as we do that, we will make sure that the schools are no longer used as military arsenals and bunkers and that teachers promote reading, rather than regime propaganda.

And because Iraq is now free, economic sanctions are pointless. It is time for the United Nations to lift the sanctions so the Iraqis can use some resources to build their own prosperity.

Like so many generations of immigrants, Iraqi Americans have embraced and enriched this great country without ever forgetting the land of your birth. Liberation for Iraq has been a long time coming, but you never lost faith. You knew the great sorrow of Iraq. You also knew the great promise of Iraq, and you shared the hope of the Iraqi people.

You and I both know that Iraq can realize those hopes. Iraq can be an example of peace and prosperity and freedom to the entire Middle East. It'll be a hard journey, but at

every step of the way, Iraq will have a steady friend in the American people.

May God continue to bless the United States of America, and long live a free Iraq.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:46 p.m. in the theater at the Ford Community and Performing Arts Center. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Mayor Michael A. Guido of Dearborn; G. Richard Wagoner, Jr., president and chief executive officer, General Motors Corp.; William Clay Ford, Jr., chairman of the board and chief executive officer, Ford Motor Co.; Dieter Zetsche, president and chief executive officer, Chrysler Group; and Lt. Gen. Jay Garner, USA (Ret.), Director, Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance for Post-war Iraq, Department of Defense. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of Edward Gaylord

April 28, 2003

Edward Gaylord was a shining example of generosity, patriotism, and dedication to helping others. As a business leader with a distinguished career in journalism, he spent a lifetime in selfless service to his community and State. I was honored to have Ed as a partner in the Texas Rangers Baseball Club. He was an excellent partner and a fine man. Laura joins me in extending our heartfelt condolences to Ed's family and friends.

Remarks on the Global HIV/AIDS Initiative

April 29, 2003

Thank you all very much for the warm welcome. Welcome to the people's house, the White House. It's my honor to welcome Members of the United States Senate and the United States Congress, members from the ambassadorial corps, and fellow Americans who deeply care about a neighbor in need.

HIV/AIDS is a tragedy for millions of men, women, and children, and a threat to stability of entire countries and of regions of our world. Our nations have the ability and,

therefore, the duty to confront this grave public health crisis.

We are here today to urge both Houses of the United States Congress to pass the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which will dramatically expand our fight against AIDS across this globe.

I appreciate so very much Secretary of State Colin Powell's commitment to this issue. The fight against AIDS is an integral of our Nation's foreign policy. I appreciate so very much Secretary Tommy Thompson's dedication to this issue, as the chairman of the Global Fund. He knows this administration's passion about doing our duty. And I want to thank these members of my Cabinet for being here today.

I also want to thank the chairman and the ranking members of the committees responsible for getting this legislation moving. Senator Lugar and Senator Biden both committed to this legislation, both working closely with our administration to get a good bill out of the Senate. And Senator Hyde and Senator Lantos have been at work already, and I appreciate their leadership as well. We're honored to have you here, and we're honored to have the other Members of the Congress with us today who care deeply about this issue.

I also want to thank Tony Fauci. He works for the NIH. He is on the leading edge of finding the vaccines that will help those who suffer from AIDS. I love Tony's commitment to humans, to what's best for mankind. I'm glad you're here, Tony.

I also want to thank Joe O'Neill, as the Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. He works closely in my administration. I appreciate his advice. I appreciate his counsel.

I want to thank Gaddi Vasquez, who's the Director of the Peace Corps, who is here. We just came from a roundtable discussion, and somebody came up with the idea, as this initiative goes forward and we get a good piece of legislation out of Congress, and when I sign it, hopefully before Memorial Day, one of the things we may want to do is to convert some of our Peace Corps to helping people in Africa who have got AIDS. So Gaddi, I want you to think carefully about that idea.